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## United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 13, 1984

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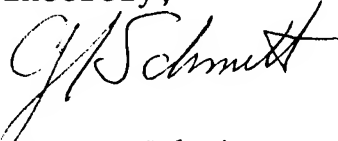
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Dear

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Senator Moynihan called this morning from New York and was anxious that I relay copies to you of his effort on the Soviet succession. He was quite pleased with the briefing of last Friday. For the Senator, Dr. Blau and myself, thank you.

Sincerely,



Gary J. Schmitt  
Minority Staff Director

Enclosure

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NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1984

31

# Moynihan views the Soviet succession

FRIDAY afternoon, I spent a few hours with a group of weary "Kremlinologists" who had been up all night preparing an intelligence assessment of the newest Soviet "succession crisis." (The event comes irregularly, usually when the incumbent dies. There are no rules. Anything can happen. It is properly seen as a moment of inherent danger as well as promise.)

Konstantin Chernenko had been appointed head of the funeral arrangements commission. Although there are no rules for choosing a new Soviet leader, there has been one regularity. From the time of the death of Lenin, the man chosen to head the funeral commission has succeeded the man

whose burial he arranges. Chernenko had to be seen as the Politburo member "most likely to succeed."

There were further grounds for the cautious forecast. Chernenko was the second-ranking party secretary, ranking just after Yuri Andropov. He was old, born in 1911, hence a member of the generation that has ruled Russia since the time of Khrushchev and is little disposed to give up power.

There are only five members of the Politburo born after the Russian Revolution. Two of these, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, minister of agriculture, and Grigory V. Romanov, former head of the Leningrad party, were contenders, surely,

**KREMLIN PARTY ANDROPOV**

By Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan

But their choice would mean a new generation taking over. Not likely. Therefore, Chernenko.

And who is he? First of all he is the man Brezhnev had hoped would succeed him. He is much associated with the era of detente, and is thought not to have supported the invasion of Afghanistan. He is Ukrainian.

He once headed the party in Moldavia, a region partly stolen from Romania after World War II. He is a survivor; he was quick to see that Andropov had locked up the succession 15 months ago, and was the first to nominate him.

Even so, Andropov

was probably moving to oust him. A stream of criticism had been directed to the Moldavian party, and there was some business about a gold samovar that seemed directed at him as part of Andropov's drive against corruption. But then Andropov died.

And if it is Chernenko, what then? My strongest comment would be that our relations might appear to improve without actually improving at all, and that is to be watched.

Chernenko knows the language of detente. That can be terribly beguiling. In 1973, I heard Brezhnev address the Indian parliament. You would have thought the

two best friends in the world were the U.S. and the USSR. But at that very moment the Soviets had begun to deploy SS-9 missiles aimed at targets in Western Europe (followed by the SS-20s in 1978), which has led to the present crisis there.

I hate to say it, but I think we were fooled by the original detente. So let us not be fooled by a rerun.

In any event, Soviet leaders are slow to consolidate power. Andropov was an exception, but Brezhnev, for example, took eight years before he felt confident enough to move into Stalin's office.

The Politburo now has a majority of Andro-

pov's men. This means that the KGB — the secret police, an army really — will continue to wield much greater influence than in the past. (The Communist Party in the Soviet Union somehow always managed to keep the Red Army and the KGB out of its inner circles. That is no longer so of the KGB.) Besides, we believe Chernenko is more than somewhat ill.

Surely President Reagan is right to think of getting off to a new start with the Soviets. Our relations have been at the flash point for the past three or four years, and that has to stop. But let us remember that our present disenchantment comes from hav-

ing, in the 1970s, paid too much heed to what the Soviets were saying and too little to what they were doing.

So much for the forecasting business. As our little group was breaking up Friday afternoon, a man of great experience recalled a stunning deduction Gen. George S. Patton had made in a critical moment in World War II. The German Army in all its history had never launched an offensive at night through mountainous, winter terrain. Therefore, he concluded, "that is exactly what they are going to do." But Patton was a genius. All we can be is prudent, and be ready for the unexpected.